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Montana. Dept. of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
MEPA,NEPA/ARM 12.6.602 format, Holter Lake land transfer

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Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks

1420 East Sixth Avenue
Helena, Montana 59620

February 24, 1993

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TO:

Environmental Quality Council, Capitol Building, Helena, MT 59620
Bureau of Land Management, 106 Parkmont, Butte, MT 59701
Director's Office, Dept. of Health & Environmental Sciences
Director's Office, Dept. of Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Montana Dept. of Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Region Four Headquarters
4600 Giant Springs Road, Great Falls, MT 59406
State Historic Preservation Office, Montana Historical Society
Montana State Library
Board of County Commissioners, Lewis & Clark County Courthouse, Helena, MT 59624
Jim Jensen, Montana Environmental Information Center, POB 1184, Helena, MT 59624
Janet Ellis, Montana Audubon Council, P. O. Box 924, Helena, MT 59624
George Oshenski, P.O. Box 689, Helena, MT 59624

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The enclosed Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared for the transfer of lands between BLM and DFWP along Holter Lake, and is submitted for your consideration. Questions and comments will be accepted until **March 24, 1993.** There will be an open house on March 16 from 1pm to 4pm at the Fish, Wildlife and Parks building, 1420 E. Sixth Ave, Helena. If you have questions, feel free to contact me at 444-3750. All comments may be sent to Montana Dept. of Fish, Wildlife & Parks, 1420 East Sixth Ave. Helena, MT 59620.

This EA consists of three parts; Part I - Project Description, Part II - Narrative, Part III - EA Check List. Because this action is administrative in nature and will not cause any land disturbance it does not fall within 12.6.602 ARM, however, the DFWP will be following the public involvement process as specified in 12.6.602.

Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,

Doug

PLEASE RETURN

Doug Monger
Assistant Administrator
Parks Division

cc: Design and Construction
Legal Unit
Mary Ellen McDonald
Fisheries Division
Wildlife Division
Environmental Quality Council
Room 106, State Capitol
Helena, MT 59620

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HOLTER LAKE LAND TRANSFER

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. **Type of Proposed State Action:**

The proposed action for this project is to transfer the state owned and operated sites on Holter Lake, specifically Log Gulch and Departure Point ,for specific parcels of BLM property within the boundary of the Beartooth Wildlife Management Area. The purpose of this action is to consolidate management of recreation areas to one agency, to reduce the expenditures made by the state thus saving State Parks system operating budgets and to consolidate land holdings and management within the Wildlife Management Area.

This action does not fall within A.R.M. 12.6.602, however the public involvement process of that rule is being followed.

2. **Agency Authority for the Proposed Action:**

A.R.M. 12.8.102 (DFWP), 43 U.S. C. 869 et seq (BLM)

3. **Name of Project:** Holter Lake Land Transfer

4. **Name, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor (if other than the agency)**

Montana Department of Fish Wildlife and Parks
Doug Monger
1420 E Sixth Avenue
Helena Mt. 59620
(406)444-3750

Bureau of Land Management
Loretta Park
106 Parkmont
Butte Mt 59401
(406)494-5059

5. **If Applicable:**

Estimated Construction/Commencement Date: February 1 1993
Estimated Completion Date: May 1 1993
Current Status of Project Design (% complete): Preliminary stages, appraisals being prepared

6. **Location Affected by Proposed Action (county, range and township)**

Lewis and Clark County, various sections T13N R3W, T14N R2W, T14N R3W

7. **Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:**

(a) Developed:
residential... 0 acres
industrial.... 0 acres

(b) Open Space/Woodlands/
Recreation....787.48 acres

(c) Wetlands/Riparian
Areas.....0 acres

(d) Floodplain...0 acres

(e) Productive:
irrigated cropland... 0 acres
dry cropland..... 0 acres
forestry..... 0 acres
rangeland..... 160 acres
other..... acres

8. **Map/site plan:** See attached

9. **Narrative Summary of the Proposed Action or Project including the Benefits and Purpose of the Proposed Action.**

The purpose of the project is to consolidate managemment by the respective agencies thus saving each agency a significant amount of money and streamlining government efforts. BLM is the manager of the Holter Lake recreation area near by the FWP sites. Through this consolidation BLM will be able to manage three sites in one area using one maintenance crew and consolidating use of service providing vendors thus saving the operations dollars.

FWP will consolidate their land holding within the WMA thus adding continuity to the operation of the WMA and again saving management costs.

Each agencies property is being appraised and values will taken into consideration for the consolidation.

See E.A. Narrative, PART II

10. **Listing of any other Local, State or Federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction.**

(a) Permits:

Agency Name	Permit	Date Filed/#
none		

(b) Funding:

Agency Name	Funding Amount
none	

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

Agency Name	Type of Responsibility
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,	USF&WS must approve the Beartooth Federal Aid land aquisition project and issue a FONSI prior to any commitment by DFWP to transfer any properties to BLM

11. **List of Agencies Consulted During Preparation of the EA:**

Montana Dept of Natural Resources	Flood Plain
U.S. Soil Conservation Service	Prime Farm Land
Montana State Historic Preservation Office	

12. **Describe the level of public involvement for this project if any and, given the complexity and the seriousness of the environmental issues associated with the proposed action, is the level of public involvement appropriate under the circumstances?**

This EA was distributed to the attached list of interested parties. The public involvement was solicited via two state newspapers. A public open house was held March 16, 1993.

13. **Duration of comment period if any:** 30 days

14. **Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:**

No mitigation is expected (needed) on this project, inasmuch as no land manipulation or changes are being undertaken. This action is only an administrative change of land ownerships.

15. **Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? YES / NO If an EIS is not required, explain <u>why</u> the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action:**

This section to be completed following the public involvement process.

PART II. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

HOLTER LAKE LAND TRANSFER

I. INTRODUCTION

In January 1992, the Bureau of Land Management, Butte District Office was approached by the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) with a land trade proposal. FWP is suffering from severe budget problems and hopes that turning over management of a recreation area with its incumbent maintenance/ development requirements to the BLM would make more money available to manage other components of the State parks system. BLM would acquire an additional high use recreation area on Holter Lake plus some adjacent land which fits in well with the recent BLM emphasis on recreational resources. FWP, in return, would acquire BLM lands located within the Beartooth Wildlife Management Area which would result in a more consolidated State land pattern.

The land transaction is consistent with the Supplement to the State Director's Guidance (June 1984) since the BLM would be disposing of isolated tracts. It is also in conformance with the Headwaters Resource Management Plan (RMP) (November 1983) as well as the Recreation 2000 Initiative. The Headwaters RMP identifies land with the following resource values for retention purposes or as acquisition priorities:

-developed recreation and recreation access sites;
-accessibility of the land for public purposes.

The RMP states further that acquisition of such land should:

-facilitate access to public land and resources;
-maintain or enhance important public values and uses;
-maintain or enhance local social and economic values; or
-facilitate implementation of other aspects of the Headwaters RMP.

Acquisition of the offered State lands with the excellent access provided is consistent with the above criteria. The BLM, as a result of acquiring these lands, would be in a position to further enhance the recreation sites to meet the growing public demand for recreation opportunities. Land in the Holter Lake area is designated as a retention zone by Management Unit 19 of the RMP. Management guidelines under the preferred Alternative recommend this area have restricted vehicle access, and be closed to utility corridors and oil and gas leasing and development. It was also recommended that forestry management be given a low priority.

While the tracts selected for disposal are within a retention zone (Management Unit 19), they do meet the disposal criteria of being isolated tracts. Disposal is also justified since the tracts will remain in public ownership and their management as part of the Beartooth Game Range will continue.

The proposal is also consistent with the Montana State Exchange Master Plan (June 1986) in which the State of Montana and the BLM agreed to work together on land exchanges in order to resolve their respective land management problems due to fragmented land patterns. This action would also be consistent with recent direction from the Washington office regarding an emphasis on recreational resources.

II. PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

Proposed Action

The transaction agreed to by both the BLM and FWP in order to process this land trade would require the BLM to patent the selected Federal lands to the State of Montana via the Recreation and Public Purposes Act of June 14, 1926, (44 Stat. 74; 43 USC 869), as amended, and the regulations thereunder (43 CFR 2740 and 2912). The State of Montana, in return, would transfer the offered State lands to the BLM. This method was chosen for two reasons: 1) it would be a much faster process, and 2) the BLM would not be restricted by having to equalize land values.

The legal description of the subject lands is:

Selected BLM Lands

Township 13 North, Range 3 West:

Section 2: Lots 6, 7
Section 12: Lots 3, 4, 5

Township 14 North, Range 2 West:

Section 12: E½NE¼, NW¼NE¼ NE¼NW¼, S½

All in Lewis and Clark County

Offered State Lands

Township 14 North, Range 3 West:

Section 14: SE¼SE¼

Those portions of the following described pieces or parcels of land lying above and elevation of 3570 feet:

Township 14 North, Range 3 West:

Section 23: Lot 1, NW¼NE¼, E½NE¼

Those portions of the following lands outside the project boundary of FPC License 2188 and lying above and northeast of the County Road as the same exists on March 1, 1964:

Township 14 North, Range 3 West:

Section 14: Lot 1, NW¼SW¼, SE¼SW¼
Section 15: N½N½, SE¼NW¼, S½NE¼, NE¼SE¼

All in Lewis and Clark County

Alternative B

The only other alternative considered was the "no action" alternative. This would result in isolated tracts of Federal land continuing to be surrounded by the Beartooth Game Range and a loss to BLM of a high use recreational area. It would also sustain the financial burden on the State Parks System.

III. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The selected Federal lands, except for Tract D, and the offered State lands all border Holter Lake or the Missouri River directly across from the Sleeping Giant Wilderness Study Area. The selected Federal lands consist of four tracts: Tract B begins a half mile to the north where Ming Bar begins and Tract C is a little over half a mile to the northwest of Tract B. Tract D is several miles to the northeast of all the subject tracts.

The offered State lands are concentrated in and around the Log Gulch and Departure Point Recreation Sites.

Refer to the attached maps.

Access

Access to the selected Federal lands is limited. All the tracts on Holter Lake are accessible by boat and those tracts in the Ming Bar area are accessible by a primitive trail. Tract D, in T14N R2W, section 12, is also accessible by a primitive road.

Excellent access is provided to the offered State lands by means of a county road which transverses all the subject tracts but one, which is still accessible by a primitive road that branches off the county road.

Mineral Resources

BLM records indicate a mining claim on Lots 1 and 2 of section 14, T13N R3W, in the Ming Bar area. The claimants have been contacted to determine their willingness to relinquish the claim as the field examination showed little potential for valuable minerals in the area. Mineral ownership is retained in Federal ownership in R&PP actions, but Federal regulations prohibit an R&PP action on land which is encumbered by mining claims.

Water Resources

All the selected Federal lands, with the exception of Tract D, border Holter Lake; however, there are no other perennial water sources on these tracts. Cottonwood Creek flows through Tract D for approximately 1/4 mile.

All of the offered State lands also border Holter Lake, other than the SESE of section 14, T14N R3W (Tract 1),. There is also a well at Log Gulch Campground. The water right to this well would be transferred to the BLM should the lands come under BLM jurisdiction.

Vegetation

Selected Federal Lands: Vegetation on the selected Federal lands is diverse and plentiful. Tract A contains scattered Ponderosa pine, heavy concentrations of prickly pear, numerous wild flowers including phlox,

larkspur, black-eyed susan and shrubs such as currant and serviceberry. Important grasses include bluebunch wheatgrass and Idaho fescue. Thistles were also observed in the area. Topography is moderate with slopes of about 8-10%. There has been some surface disturbance and therefore damage to vegetation on this tract as a result of a recently located mining claim.

Tract B consists of much steeper topography, with slopes of 40-50%. Vegetation observed included serviceberry, chokecherry, currant, juniper, a healthy cover of Ponderosa pine and thick grasses.

There is a marked contrast between Tract C and the two previous tracts. With the exception of the rock cliff which juts into the lake on the south end of the tract, the topography is much more moderate consisting of several benches with only scattered trees and shrubs present.

Tract D consists mainly of steep ridges with slopes of 40-50%. The west end of this tract was burned in 1990. Vegetation observed in the area included cottonwood, aspen, Ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, snowberry, bluebells, shooting stars and lush grasses.

Offered State Lands: Tract 1, north of Log Gulch Campground, contains steep and rocky slopes. Vegetation consists mainly of Ponderosa pine, junipers, chokecherry, sumac and wild flowers.

Tract 2, to the northwest of Tract 1, is not quite as steep as Tract 1. It is crossed by a power line. This tract contains fewer trees and shrubs, with the exception of a drainage which appears quite lush compared to the rest of the tract.

Tract 3, which contains Log Gulch and Departure Point Recreation Areas, consists of heavy concentrations of Ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir on 40-50% slopes with scattered cottonwood, chokecherry and wild rose on the more level areas. Some of the cottonwoods appear to be dying back. The grass is in fair to good condition where it is not being trampled by vehicle traffic.

Wildlife

The lands affected by this EA are situated within or are adjacent to the Beartooth Wildlife Management Area (WMA). This area is covered by a management plan for the WMA. This plan has a comprehensive discussion of wildlife values in the area, as well as a species list for the area. The lands affected by this EA have high wildlife values, especially for mule deer and elk. The lands have the potential to provide very high quality year round mule deer and elk habitat. Relocations from radio collared elk indicated this area is heavily used by elk throughout the year. Considerable public hunting of big game occur in these areas.

In addition to the interest in big game species this site also has a small prairie dog town. The site also offers a variety of waterfowl including Canada geese, pelicans and numerous species of ducks.

Holter reservoir is a popular sport fishery for brown trout, rainbow trout, Kokanee salmon, walleye and yellow perch.

Forestry

While both the selected Federal tracts and the offered State lands contain heavy concentrations of Ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir, logging would not be appropriate considering the other resource values which are present in these areas, with the possible exception of Tract D. It appears that some unintentional logging in trespass may have taken place on the east end of this parcel, logging is not a future activity expected by either party involved in the EA.

Visual Resources

Since the selected lands are located on Holter Lake, they would be considered foreground to boaters on the river. Scenic value is high on Tracts B and C due to lack of evidence of human intrusion, other than evidence of boaters camping in small areas and a primitive road to the east of Tract B. In Tract A, surface disturbance as a result of mining claims has occurred. Tract D would be seldom seen background considering its distance from a main travel route. It has incurred some logging on the east end, which may be a result of an unintentional trespass, and fire damage to the drainages on the west end. All selected Federal lands would be rated Class II.

State offered non-recreation areas would be Class II rated, while the recreation sites would be Class IV. All tracts are in the foreground given their proximity to the county access road.

Recreation Resources

The selected Federal tracts offer a variety of recreational opportunities including boating, fishing, picnicking, hiking, watchable wildlife, hunting, and photography. However, as stated earlier, access is limited requiring either a boat or travel over a primitive trail. The availability of these recreational resources is restricted on a seasonal basis as a result of road closures to protect wildlife and due to the lake freezing over.

Recreation on the offered State land occurs almost exclusively at Log Gulch and Departure Point Recreation Areas. These are both maintained and easily accessed sites. Maintenance, oversight and information are provided by two seasonal on-site caretakers.

Both recreation sites are administered daily using seasonals and volunteers from Memorial Day to Labor Day, at a minimum. Sites are maintained as funding allows but significant improvements are needed. BLM envisions a project plan in the future detailing management and facility improvements.

Facilities at the sites include:

-73 campsites with firepits
- 7 handicapped campsites with firepits
-15 day-use picnic tables
- 7 boat tie-up areas
- a boat trailer parking area
- 1 dock
- 1 double wide loading/unloading ramp
- 1 fish cleaning table
- 6 dumpsters
- 4 double outhouses
- 2 single outhouses
- 1 yard light
- 1 well

Services provided include:

-visitor information/assistance
-firewood
-grass cutting
-weed control
-water quality testing
-garbage pickup
-sewage pumping

Fee charges consist of a day-use fee at $3/day and an additional camping fee at $5/day (total of $8). Total revenue is approximately $23,000 a year. Operations and maintenance costs which include supplies

overhead, seasonals/volunteers, contracted services, repairs, etc., come to $40,000 annually.

The caretakers are provided with housing by the State of Montana but there is no room available for an office which means doing business with customers either in their home or on their front porch. There is a need to build on to the house extending out the back and making room for an office. The living quarters are accommodated by a septic system with a drain field.

An equipment shed is located near the house and holds all the equipment necessary to keep the campground well maintained including a tractor mower, a gas mower, a gas sickle, weed eater and various tools, all owned by the State of Montana.

A well with a capacity of 25 GPM is centrally located in the campground area. A recent water quality test indicates no problems.

Cultural Resources

Survey Method: Approximately 12.5 work days were used by the BLM to inventory the selected Federal lands at the Class III level. Total number of crew members on any given day varied from one (project leader) to four. A maximum of 30 meter-wide transects were walked throughout the survey area. Whenever two or more crew members were present, the project leader (Park) walked meandering zig-zag transects behind the crew. Any topographic features not traversed by transects which had potential to possess cultural properties were inventoried by the project leader. These features included saddles, ridges, hilltops, terraces, drainages, and rock outcrops likely to contain a lithic material source or have the presence of rock shelters/caves.

Summary Description and Evaluation of Cultural Resources (site form attached): One historic mining site was recorded on Tract B as a result of this inventory. A record search of the BLM's master title plat and unpatented mining claim microfiche showed no record of a mining claim application, past or present, ever being filed.

The historic mining site, 24LC1099, consists of a placered area 15 meters in width by 23 meters in length by 5 meters in depth. The general shape is that of an inverted cone. The site is situated on a steep (30%) side slope and was hydraulically mined. Water was transported to the placer area by means of a lateral ditch connected to a perpendicular mainline ditch. The cobble and gravel tailings are on the downhill side of the placer area.

No evidence of habitation (trash pits, cabin, mining debris, etc.) was observed in or near the site area. The site lacks any documented associations and is a common historic feature. It is unlikely to yield information important to history and does not appear to meet National Register criteria. Consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer has occurred and the concurrence with a finding of no significant impact.

Threatened and Endangered Species

The Holter Lake area which borders the Beartooth WMA is frequented by occasional bald eagles and peregrine falcons. In recent years two bald eagle nests have been located on Holter Lake.

A peregrine falcon hack site has been established on a large rocky outcrop on Ming Bar overlooking Holter Lake. Young peregrines have been fed and eventually released into the wild each of the past three years.

The prairie dog town in the EA area has been surveyed for its potential as a black footed ferret site. Because of its small size and the geographic isolation of the town it has been determined by DFWP biologists that

the site is not capable of supporting black footed ferrets.

Wetlands/Riparian Zones

There is a quarter-mile of riparian in this area and approximately two miles of lake shore on the selected Federal lands, and three miles of lake shore on the offered State lands. None of these areas are with established flood plains. (Knapp conversation with DNRC.)

Wilderness

The Sleeping Giant Wilderness Study Area is located directly across the river from both the selected Federal lands, with the exception of Tract D, and the offered State lands.

Prime and Unique Farmlands

The US Soil Conservation Service has been contacted, there is no prime or unique farmland affected by this action.

Existing and Potential Uses

Since the selected Federal tracts are located within the Beartooth Game Range, they have been traditionally managed as part of the game range, which would be considered the highest and best use of these lands. They have also been used as recreational areas. However, the potential does exist for increased casual mining on Ming Bar and logging on Tract D.

It is highly unlikely that the offered State tracts would be put to any use other than the recreation areas which already exist; the lands are restricted to such use by the covenants contained in the deed transferring these lands from The Nature Conservancy to FWP. Montana Power does have a right-of-way for a power line which crosses a portion of and services Log Gulch Campground.

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

This exchange would have no effects on the following concerns:

Air quality
ACECs
Prime and unique farmlands
Floodplains
Native American concerns
Solid/hazardous wastes
Drinking/groundwater quality
Wild & scenic rivers
Threatened or endangered species

A. Impacts of the Proposed Action

Mineral Resources

Should the lands be exchanged, the selected Federal lands would become State lands. The subsurface estate would remain under Federal ownership and under the R&PP Act would be closed to mineral entry.

The offered State lands, under the proposed action, would also not be open to mineral entry since mineral ownership would remain with the State of Montana.

Vegetation

There has been some disturbance to vegetation (less than one acre) in the Ming Bar area as a result of mining claims located there. In Tract D there appears to have been some unintentional unauthorized logging on the east end and the potential does exist for authorized logging in this area. Trading these tracts out of Federal ownership would prevent future disturbance since logging is not allowed within the game range.

There would be no negative effect on vegetation on the offered State lands should the lands change ownership.

Wildlife

State ownership of the selected Federal lands would prevent possible disturbance to wildlife from the additional location of mining claims in the Ming Bar area. Tract D contains important elk habitat, which would be protected from potential logging if these lands are traded to the State of Montana.
The prairie dog town in Tract 2 of the offered State lands would afford an opportunity to establish a Watchable Wildlife viewing area under Federal ownership.

Cultural Resources

The historic mining site, 24LC1099, lacks any documented associations, is a common historic feature and is unlikely to yield information important to history. The proposed action would have no impact on this site.

There are no known cultural sites on the offered State lands.

Forestry

Since the selected Federal lands would be incorporated into the Beartooth Game Range, there would be a slight impact on forestry resources as logging would not be permitted.

There would be no change in forestry resources on the offered State lands as a result of this land transaction.

Visual Resources

Trading the selected Federal lands to the State of Montana would protect the visual resources from any future alteration as a result of mining or authorized logging.

Visual resources on the offered State lands would not be affected should this land trade be consummated.

Recreation Resources

There would be no impact to recreational resources on the selected Federal tracts as a result of the proposed action.

Under BLM management, fees at the recreation sites on the offered State lands would be reduced given the current rates at Holter Lake Recreation Site; the day-use fee would be $2/day and overnight camping

would be $4/day for a total of $6. Facilities would be upgraded and additional maintenance dollars would be allocated to better serve the public users of these two important sites. Long term availability of the site to the public would also be ensured.

Threatened and Endangered Species

The proposed action would have no bearing on threatened or endangered species on either the selected Federal lands or the offered State lands.

Wetlands/Riparian Zones

The BLM will transfer to DFWP a quarter-mile of riparian on the selected Federal lands in Tract D as a result of the proposed action. However, since the lands would be incorporated into the Beartooth Game Range, the riparian values would be protected from any authorized logging or other detrimental activities.

Riparian values on the offered State lands would not be affected by the proposed action.

Wilderness

The Sleeping Giant Wilderness Study Area is located directly across the river from both the selected Federal lands, with the exception of Tract D, and the offered State lands. Acquisition of the selected Federal lands by the State of Montana would have a favorable impact since surface disturbance activities would be prohibited and the wilderness viewshed would thus be protected.

Existing and Potential Uses

The current recreational use of the selected Federal lands would not be affected by the proposed action, but the land trade could have a slightly negative impact on other existing and potential uses in the Ming Bar area as well as Tract D. Mining on Ming Bar, once the current claimant's permit expires, would be prohibited and the potential for logging Tract D would be lost.

Existing recreational use would be enhanced on the offered State lands as a result of the proposed action since more dollars would be made available to operate the sites and improve the facilities. It is highly unlikely that the tracts would be put to any use in the future other than the recreation areas which are in place, especially in light of the growing public demand for recreational opportunities.

B. Impacts of the No Action Alternative

Mineral Resources

Impact on the selected Federal lands would be minimal if the land trade is not consummated. The Federal minerals would continue to be open to location and it would not be necessary to obtain the relinquishment of the mining claim on Ming Bar.

Mineral resources on the offered State lands would not be affected should this land trade not be pursued.

Vegetation

There could be a negative effect on vegetative resources on the selected Federal lands if this land trade falls through. Surface disturbance could occur as a result of additional mining claims being located, especially in the Ming Bar area. Also, additional logging could occur on Tract D.

There would be no change to vegetation on the offered State lands if the lands do not change ownership.

Wildlife

The potential for wildlife disturbance does exist on the selected Federal lands if additional mining claims were to be located on Ming Bar or if additional logging occurs on Tract D as a result of these lands remaining in Federal ownership.

There would be no impact to wildlife on the offered State tracts if the lands remain under their current ownership.

Cultural Resources

The failure to consummate this land trade would have no impact on the one cultural site located on the selected Federal lands.

No known cultural sites exist on the offered State lands.

Forestry

Forestry resources on Tract D of the selected Federal lands would continue to be available for logging if this tract remains in Federal ownership.

Forestry resources on the offered State lands would not be affected if this proposal is not followed through.

Visual Resources

Failure to follow through with the land trade would leave the Ming Bar area open to mineral entry and subsequent surface disturbance which would detract from the scenic values of the area as seen by boaters as well as land users. The visual resources of Tract D would also be vulnerable to logging practices even though this tract is considered seldom seen background.

There would be no impact to the visual resources on the State lands if they should remain in State ownership.

Recreation Resources

Recreational activities would probably remain much the same on the selected Federal tracts under the proposed action, unless increased logging and mining were to take place.

If the "no action alternative" is chosen, recreation on the offered State lands would probably not be significantly altered, but the strain on the budget of FWP would be great if an attempt were made to keep the facilities in at least their present condition. Therefore, necessary maintenance and improvements would most likely be minimally conducted. In addition, the BLM would lose the opportunity to offer the public a high visibility, high use recreation area.

Threatened and Endangered Species

Threatened or endangered species would not be affected on either the selected Federal lands or the offered State tracts if this land trade does not take place.

Wetlands/Riparian Zones

The quarter-mile of riparian on the selected Federal lands in Tract D is at risk of degradation due to future authorized logging should these lands not be traded to the State of Montana and incorporated into the game range.

Riparian values on the offered State lands would not be affected by the no action alternative.

Wilderness

The viewshed from the Sleeping Giant Wilderness Study Area across the river from the selected Federal lands could be compromised should this land trade fall through since the Federal tracts would continue to be open to mineral entry and the subsequent surface disturbance.

There would be no impact on the selected State lands.

Existing and Potential Uses

There would be a slightly favorable impact to existing and potential uses of mining and logging, respectively, on the selected Federal lands should they remain in Federal ownership in that increased mining and potential logging could occur. However, this in turn, would be detrimental to wildlife, vegetation, visual, riparian and recreational resources.

A negative impact could be expected on the current recreational use of the offered State lands should the proposed action be rejected. The State of Montana is suffering severe budget restrictions and their ability to maintain these recreation sites is compromised. Operations and facilities face future deterioration under the status quo.

Rangeland and paleontological resources do not exist on any of the subject tracts and so were not addressed in this EA.

V. CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

State Historic Preservation Officer
Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Current seasonal employees at Log Gulch

PART III. Checklist of Impacts

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	IMPACTS					
	UNKNOWN*	NO IMPACTS	IMPACTS:* MINOR	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT	CAN IMPACTS BE MITIGATED*	COMMENT INDEX
1. LAND RESOURCES						
Will the proposed action result in:						
▸ a. Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?		*				
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil which would reduce productivity or fertility?		*				
▸ c. Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				
d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?		X				
f. Other _____						

*Include an attachment with a narrative explanation describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

**** This land Ownership consolidation will result in no land or water manipulation this is only an administrative change.**

▸ Indicates the need to include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	IMPACTS					
	UNKNOWN*	NO IMPACTS	IMPACTS:* MINOR	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT	CAN IMPACTS BE MITIGATED*	COMMENT INDEX
2. AIR						
Will the proposed action result in:		X				
▸ a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (also see 13 (c))		X				
b. Creation of objectionable odors?		X				
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		X				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		X*				
e. *For P-R/D-J projects, will the project result in any discharge which will conflict with federal or state air quality regs? (Also see 2a)		XX				
f. Other _____						

*Include an attachment with a narrative explanation describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

*Indicates the need to determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Air Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

XX - This transfer is administrative in nature and will have no effect on air quality.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	IMPACTS					
	UNKNOWN*	NO IMPACTS	IMPACTS:* MINOR	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT	CAN IMPACTS BE MITIGATED*	COMMENT INDEX
3. WATER						
Will the proposed action result in:						
▸ a. Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?		X				
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?		X				
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of flood water or other flows?		X				
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		X				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		X				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		X				
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?		X				
i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		X				
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		X				
k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		X				
l. **For P-R/D-J, will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c)		XX				
m. *For P-R/D-J, will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (Also see 3a)		X				
n. Other: _____						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

XX - This project will have no effect on any designated floodplain, or water discharge as per Steve Knapp's discussion with DNRC.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	IMPACTS					
	UNKNOWN*	NO IMPACTS	IMPACTS:* MINOR	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT	CAN IMPACTS BE MITIGATED*	COMMENT INDEX
4. VEGETATION						
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?		X				
b. Alteration of a plant community?		X				
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?		X				
f. **For P-R/D-J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?		XX				
g. Other: _____						

*Include an attachment with a narrative explanation describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

**Indicates the need to include a discussion about that issue in the EA narrative.

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Vegetation Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

** - **This project will have no effect on wetlands or prime and unique farmland as per Steve Knapp discussion with US Soil Conservation Service.**

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	IMPACTS					
	UNKNOWN*	NO IMPACTS	IMPACTS:* MINOR	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT	CAN IMPACTS BE MITIGATED*	COMMENT INDEX
. . FISH/WILDLIFE						
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		X				
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?		X				
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?		X				
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, [illegible]al or illegal harvest or [illegible]er human activity)?		X				
h. **For P-R/D-J, will the project be performed in any area in which T&E species are present, and will the project affect any T&E species or their habitat? (Also see 5f)		XX				
i. *For P-R/D-J, will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (Also see 5d)		X				
j. Other: _____						

Include an attachment with a narrative explanation describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

*Indicates the need to determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
**Indicates the need to include a discussion about that issue in the EA narrative.
▸ Indicates the need to include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Fish/Wildlife Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

XX - **See Part II, Threatened and Endangered Species section.**

IMPACTS

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT	UNKNOWN*	NO IMPACTS	IMPACTS:* MINOR	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT	CAN IMPACTS BE MITIGATED*	COMMENT INDEX
6. NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS						
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Increases in existing noise levels?		X				
b. Exposure of people to serve or nuisance noise levels?		X				
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				
e. Other: _____						

*Include an attachment with a narrative explanation describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Noise/Electrical Effects (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

IMPACTS

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT	UNKNOWN*	NO IMPACTS	IMPACTS:* MINOR	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT	CAN IMPACTS BE MITIGATED*	COMMENT INDEX
7. LAND USE						
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		X				
b. Conflicted with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		X				
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		X				
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		X				
Other: _____						

*Include an attachment with a narrative explanation describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Use (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

IMPACTS

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT	UNKNOWN*	NO IMPACTS	IMPACTS:* MINOR	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT	CAN IMPACTS BE MITIGATED*	COMMENT INDEX
8. RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS						
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?		X				
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan or create a need for a new plan?		X				
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?		X				
d. *For P-R/D-J, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a)		XX				
e. Other: _____						

*Include an attachment with a narrative explanation describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

*Indicates the need to determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Risk/Health Hazards (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

XX - No chemical toxicants will be used as a part of this administrative action.

IMPACTS

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT	UNKNOWN*	NO IMPACTS	IMPACTS:* MINOR	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT	CAN IMPACTS BE MITIGATED*	COMMENT INDEX
9. COMMUNITY IMPACTS						
Will the proposed action result in:						
▸ a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area? Positive or negative impacts to tourism.		XX				
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		X				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?		X				
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?		X				
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?		X				
f. Other: _____						

*Include an attachment with a narrative explanation describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

▸ Indicates the need to include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1f (ARM)

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Community Impacts (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

XX - **This administrative action will have no effect on communities.**

IMPACTS

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT	UNKNOWN*	NO IMPACTS	IMPACTS:* MINOR	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT	CAN IMPACTS BE MITIGATED*	COMMENT INDEX
10. PUBLIC SERVICES/ TAXES/UTILITIES						
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Will the proposed action have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify: _____		X				
b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?		X				
c. Will the proposed action result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?		X				
d. Will the proposed action result in increased used of any energy source?		X				
▸ e. Define projected revenue sources		XX				
▸ f. Define projected maintenance costs.		XX				
g. Other:_____						

*Include an attachment with a narrative explanation describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Public Services/Taxes/Utilities (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

XX - This administrative action is being undertaken to save each agency operating expenses. DFWP has historically bugeted about $40,000 for Holter Lake. This amount will be saved, however a loss of revenue is expected of $23,000 due to BLM collecting on site user fees.

IMPACTS

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT	UNKNOWN*	NO IMPACTS	IMPACTS:* MINOR	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT	CAN IMPACTS BE MITIGATED*	COMMENT INDEX
▸ 11. AESTHETICS/ RECREATION						
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?		X				
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		X				
c. Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational opportunities and settings?		X				
d. *For P-R/D-J, will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas be impacted? (Also see 11a, 11c)		X				
e. Other: _____						

*Include an attachment with a narrative explanation describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

*Indicates the need to determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
▸ Indicates the need to include a narrative description eddressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Aesthetics/Recreation (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

This administrative action will not impact any aesthetic considerations. The recreation resources will continue to be managed as they have been, only by a different agency.

IMPACTS

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT	UNKNOWN*	NO IMPACTS	IMPACTS:* MINOR	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT	CAN IMPACTS BE MITIGATED*	COMMENT INDEX
12. CULTURAL/ HISTORICAL RESOURCES						
Will the proposed action result in:						
▸ a. Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric historic, or paleontological importance?		X				
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?		X				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		X				
d. ***For P-R/D-J, will the project affect historic or cultural resources? Attach SHPO letter of clearance. (Also see 12.a)		XX				
e. Other: _____						

*Include an attachment with a narrative explanation describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

***Indicates the need to include a discussion about that issue in the EA narrative and attach documentation.
▸ Indicates the need to include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1e (ARM)

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Cultural/Historical Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

XX - See attached SHPO letter.

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA	IMPACTS: UNKNOWN*	NO IMPACTS	MINOR	POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT	CAN IMPACTS BE MITIGATED*	COMMENT INDEX
13. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:						
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on tow or more separate resources which create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)		X				
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?		X				
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?						
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		X				
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?		X				
f. *For P-R/D-J, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e)		XX				
g. **For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required.						

*Include an attachment with a narrative explanation describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

*Indicates the need to determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**Indicates the need to include a discussion about thet issue in the EA narrative.

XX - No adverse opposition expected or received to date.